

## LESSON 6: Learning from Stories

### OBJECTIVES:

- To understand that stories play a significant role in passing on the values of a society.
- To identify some of the values and/or lessons taught in each Passamaquoddy story.

### ALIGNMENT WITH MAINE STATE LEARNING RESULTS:

#### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS:

##### Process of Reading

1. Understand stories and expository texts from the perspective of the social and cultural context in which they were created.

##### Literature and Culture

1. Read literature and view films which illustrate distinct cultures in various types of works, and formulate and defend opinions gathered from the experience.

### OVERVIEW:

After listening to and reading two traditional Passamaquoddy stories, students will answer questions and discuss the cultural importance and meaning of the stories.



**TIME REQUIRED:** 40 minutes

### MATERIALS:

- Audio CD of The Little Spark and the Little Mouse
- Reproducible transcription of The Little Spark and the Little Mouse
- Koluskap and the Wind-maker story reproducible worksheet
- Reproducible *Traditional Stories* focus worksheet
- CD player
- Pencils

### VOCABULARY

#### Oral tradition

The passing along of knowledge (including tradition, customs, and skills) by word of mouth from one generation to the next. Stories are one type of oral tradition.

### PREPARATION:

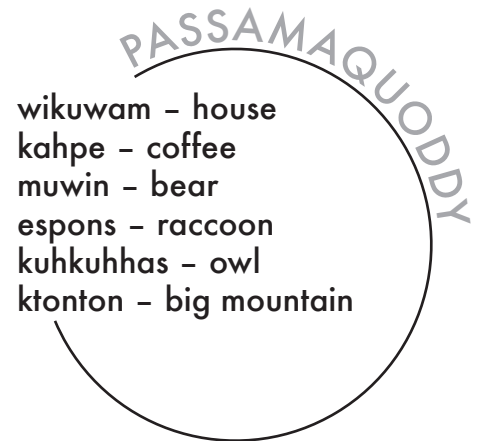
1. Set CD player with sound capabilities loud enough for entire class to hear the story.
2. Load CD recording of The Little Spark and the Little Mouse.
3. The teacher should read The Little Spark and the Little Mouse transcription.
4. Koluskap and the Wind-maker story and the *Traditional Stories* focus worksheet: Make enough copies for each group.

## INTRODUCTION:

Traditional Passamaquoddy stories have been passed down from generation to generation. Originally, these stories were not written down—they were recited from memory. These stories teach cultural information, such as values, lessons and explanations of “how things came to be.” Many times, these stories use humor to teach an important lesson.

Today, storytelling is still an important part of Passamaquoddy culture.

Students will listen to and then read two traditional Passamaquoddy stories. Passamaquoddy Elder David A. Francis, the head of the Passamaquoddy Language program at the Waponhaki Museum, Pleasant Point, tells the first story, The Little Spark and the Little Mouse. Then, the teacher will read the second story called Koluskap and the Wind-maker. Encourage students to just sit back and enjoy the stories. If necessary, they may be played or recited a second time.



## PROCEDURE:

1. Play the audio recording of The Little Spark and the Little Mouse for the class. It may need to be played a second time. (There is a transcribed copy of the story available for the teacher.)
2. Discuss the following questions:
  - What lesson does the Little Spark learn?
  - What lesson does the Little Mouse learn?
  - What does this story explain about the mouse?
  - What is a “value” and what values are reflected in this story?
3. The teacher now reads the Koluskap and the Wind-maker story aloud to the class. Tell students: This story’s main character is Koluskap (GLOOS-kahb). Koluskap is a “culture-hero” of the Wabanaki people. Koluskap is known for accomplishing magical and astonishing tasks. He is also known for making lots of mistakes, but he usually learns from them.
4. After the teacher reads the Koluskap and the Wind-maker story aloud, divide the class into small groups. Pass out one copy of the story and one copy of the *Traditional Stories* focus worksheet to each group.
5. Ask students to answer the questions on the worksheet as a group. One person should record the answers. Give students about 15 minutes to complete the worksheet.
6. Once all groups are finished, students should use their worksheets for the class discussion.

**WRAP UP:****Discussion Points**

- How are these two stories both alike and different in the lessons they teach?
- How are they alike in their use of humor?
- How are their explanations of the natural world and “how things came to be” both alike and different?

**TIMELINE CONNECTIONS:** Add the following important dates to the timeline of Passamaquoddy history:

- 1971 Wabanaki Bilingual Education Program (Passamaquoddy-English) Begins at Indian Township, under the Direction of Wayne Newell
- 1997 The “Passamaquoddy Players” Founded: A Drama Group that Creates Interactive Plays about Passamaquoddy Language and Culture
- 1998 Several Hundred Recordings of Passamaquoddy Words Created for the Passamaquoddy On-line Dictionary at the University of New Brunswick Mi’kmaq-Maliseet Institute

**EXTENSIONS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES:**

Direct students to read one or two other Wabanaki stories and discuss the lesson taught or nature event explained by the stories. Then, ask each student to write down a favorite family story they may have heard from Mom or Dad, an aunt or uncle, or a grandparent. Does the story teach a lesson, explain something, or is it just funny?

The Wind Eagle and Other Abenaki Stories, as told by Joseph Bruchac, 1985.

The Faithful Hunter: Abenaki Stories, as told by Joseph Bruchac, 1988.

How Glooskap Outwits the Ice Giants and Other Tales of the Maritime Indians, as retold by Howard Norman, 1989.

How Chipmunk Got His Stripes, as told by Joseph Bruchac and James Bruchac, 2001.

“Gluskap Legends,” page B-61, in The Wabanakis of Maine and the Maritimes.